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All members,
Parliamentary Press Gallery,
c/o Mr. Guy Gendron,
President,
Room 350-N
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa.

9 November 1990

Dear journalists,

Recently the Ottawa Citizen introduced me as a former CBC journalist who told a parliamentary committee that "the media is prejudiced against environmentally hypersensitive people because they believe the problem is psychological".

I am writing to tell your members that this is not my view, and it is not what I told the committee. I find the statement insulting to journalists and "the media", and I am embarrassed to have been associated with this (inaccurate) view.

The statement does not reflect my experience of "the media", I find that journalists, if anything, have shown a restrained support for persons with sensitivities.

There is evidence to show that the immune system can be adversely affected by trauma, such as a close death, war experience, and physical or emotional abuse. However, the vast majority of persons with sensitivities seem to have developed the problem for other, medical and environmental, reasons.

It is illogical to lump a heterogeneous group together, and then to create a two-sided debate. A parallel might be to ask if all whites are racist bigots, just because a minority of persons without colour can be so labelled. It is the toleration of this illogical two-sided debate that I find objectionable, and which arms those with competing interests unfairly.

I have raised this issue repeatedly with the Ottawa Citizen over the past decade. They have been kind enough to publish an OpEd article which addresses the concern (6 April 1990). But they, like the CBC, have not, apparently, encouraged their journalists to cease and desist from an illogical and potentially damaging framing of issues connected with our concerns.

Thanks

DUPLICATE

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